



# VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

APRIL 2013



Above: The winning team (left to right): Warren Clausen, Ian Stevenson, Bruce Callum and Chris Carter

## Totally Vets golf tournament

It was perfect weather for our annual Steinlager Totally Vets Classic Golf Tournament on 12th March, held at the Feilding Golf Club. This meant a great day was had by our clients, staff and suppliers.

The winning team was made up of Bruce Callum, Ian Stevenson, Warrick Clausen and our very own Chris Carter.

Warrick was also one of last year's winning team - is there a message there?!

A huge thank you to our suppliers who supported us. Without them, we would not have been able to run the event.

## Dry-cow treatment in a dry season

Dry-cow treatment of either the entire herd or selected cows is now routine practice for dairy herds. If more than 15% of your cows have been treated for mastitis during the season, then subject to your vet's advice, treatment of the entire herd is warranted.

Below this level, selective dry-cow therapy is a sensible approach, targeting cows that either have had clinical mastitis during the season or those cows in which the somatic cell count (SCC) at any herd test during the season was more than 150,000.

Dry-cow therapy is an antibiotic formulation which assists the cow to eliminate infection as the udder repairs and rejuvenates during the dry period.

The availability of dry-cow products is now many and varied: some are long-acting while others are active for a medium or shorter term. All are applied by infusing a tube into each quarter.

No matter what product is selected, treatment requires strict attention to hygiene; pushing infection into the quarter while inserting the dry-cow treatment will undo the good of treating the cow.

Over the last two seasons, the application of teat-seals either with or without dry-cow

treatment has emerged as another tool. The purpose of teat-sealing is to two-fold:

- It reduces infection entering the quarter as the cow goes into dry-off (only 50% of teat canals are closed by 7 days and 20% are open up to 40 days after the last milking); and
- Teat-sealing maintains a physical barrier in the teat canal in the lead-up to calving.

The longer the dry period, the higher the risk that the natural keratin plug in the teat canal will break down.

Teat-sealing heifers is an absolute must to reduce mastitis in the new season. Heifers are teat-sealed 4-6 weeks prior to calving and recent work suggests treating up to 1 week prior to calving will still result in a significant drop in clinical mastitis cases (heifers that have bagged up cannot be teat-sealed).

For cows, Teatseal<sup>®</sup> is applied at drying off.

**To assist in determining the economic worth of using Teatseal<sup>®</sup>, our veterinary team can run your data through calculator tools. We have also put together an introductory combo package of dry-cow and Teatseal<sup>®</sup> for this season.**

**Either contact your vet or call us to book in your dry-cow and lepto vaccination consult.**



# Totally Vets current stock health

## Dairy

The biggest challenge has been maintaining lactation (this year's income) while preserving body condition (next year's income) in the presence of very little grass. Moisture and continued warmth will hopefully give us some much needed autumn growth – maximise this wisely, utilising any supplement

you have on hand and avoid grazing those energy-depleted recovering pastures too early.

It is time to put Facial Eczema back on the radar. The much needed rain will see spore counts rise if it stays mild. Nitrate toxicity risk is increased in draught conditions, so for those lucky enough to have crops to graze, it would be wise to have them tested. Drying-



HA HA

## Texan versus Aussie

A Texan farmer goes to Australia for a holiday. There he meets an Aussie farmer and they get talking.

The Aussie shows off his big wheat field and the Texan says, "Oh! We have wheat fields that are at least twice as large."

Then they walk around the ranch a little, and the Aussie shows off his herd of cattle. The Texan immediately says, "We have longhorns that are at least twice as large as your cows."

The conversation has, meanwhile, almost died when the Texan sees a herd of kangaroos hopping through the field. He asks, "And what are those?" The Aussie, fed up with the Texan's bragging, replies with an incredulous look, "What, don't you have any grasshoppers in Texas?"

## Mark Eames and Cormac Chalmers join Totally Vets

We welcome Mark and Cormac who are the newest members of our team. Both veterinary new graduates from Massey University, they joined the production animal veterinarian team in the New Year. Mark will primarily be working out of the Feilding Branch, Cormac out of the Palmerston North Clinic.



Mark



Cormac (centre)

### Mark Eames

I was born and raised in the northern Manawatu and after attending Waituna West Primary, was a boarder here at Feilding High School. This has really helped in my first couple of months of navigating my way out to farms in the district! I am somewhat of a late-comer to the veterinary profession, after a number of years working in the tourism industry, mainly in my family's business in Mangaweka. I've also done casual work on sheep and beef farms, and worked, played and competed on whitewater rivers around the world. My wife, Carrie, and I are living in Palmy and we have two boys, Tom (3½) and Josh (2). I'm really looking forward to meeting you all in my work with you and your animals.

### Cormac Chalmers

I joined the Totally Vets team in February after spending a few months travelling around New Zealand, mainly in the South Island. This was a great break after five years of study and good preparation for my new role at Totally Vets. I enjoy many sports and am a big fan of rugby. I'm looking forward to playing what is hopefully another successful year for Massey Rugby Club; the mighty sky blue. I'm from the big smoke down the road and came to Palmerston North 5 years ago to start my vet degree. I'm really excited about starting my career as a Veterinarian and getting onto farms to meet the locals and learn more about the area.

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off decisions will need to be made, whether that is whole herd or the lighter animals. Remember the dry period is the time you can exert the greatest influence over next year's mastitis and bulk somatic cell count. For animals being dried off early, don't forget dry-cow therapy.

## Sheep & Beef

Some rain in late March has begun the expected cascade of stock health challenges.

We have seen some clinical cases of Barber's Pole Worm (mostly in lambs), but on many farms these can be a flag that ewes and especially 2ths could be under pressure too. A faecal egg count of these ewes could be quite revealing by now, especially if you are yet to put the ram out. Responses to pre-tup drenching are notoriously inconsistent, but this year is likely to be one where this intervention might be warranted.

As we mentioned in last month's newsletter, watch out for *Trichostrongylus* (black scour worm) in lambs as temperatures cool and we get more rain. Also if you have been using a white/clear combination drench on your weaner calves, now is the time to 'Switch' (pardon the pun) as *Ostertagia* 'Converge' on our young cattle! The 'mectin' component of these drenches gives a more consistent kill of *Ostertagia*, especially the inhibited forms.



# Canine calamities

Helen Sheard

Traumatic injuries are among the most common health problems affecting working dogs. Most of these are caused by stock, motorbikes or fences. Many of these conditions are treatable and many are also preventable.

### Dislocated hocks and hips

These usually occur whilst working cattle or from getting hung up on fences. Bring your dog in promptly - pain relief and prompt treatment are paramount. The sooner we replace the dislocation (provided there are no fractures), the better the likelihood of a full return to work.

### Broken bones

Options for fixing fractures depend on the bone broken, which part of the bone is affected, the severity of the break and the age of the dog. If you have a dog with a broken

bone, we will discuss the full treatment options with you.

Broken bones, sudden onset lameness and major lacerations are emergencies. The sooner they are attended to, the better the chance of success and smaller the chance of costly complications.

For any significant bleeding, compress the area with a clean towel and call Totally Vets in Feilding as soon as possible. Minor cuts and grazes are best cleaned with salty water when they first occur. This will decrease the bacterial contamination and help prevent infection. Avoid using trough water to clean wounds as this often is not very clean. If possible take the dog home on the bike or trailer, even if it is a small wound. Running home fills the wound with grass seed and contamination.

### Prevention

A few suggestions that may help to prevent accidents from occurring:

- Tie dogs onto the back of the ute - keep the chain short so they cannot jump off the side and hang themselves
- Use a bike tray protector, even if it is a bit of ply wired on. Providing grip can help - a dog slipping off is likely to end in disaster. Be especially careful if there

is a rail around the edge of the bike or trailer - catching feet under a rail as they jump off results in some of the nastiest fractures we see

- Make sure the horizontal bar at the back is covered - many dogs get their shin stuck in here when jumping off and break it
- Teach the dogs to stay behind the bike and well away from the wheels
- Minimise barbed wire - we see numerous nasty cuts from jumps over this
- Try to teach dogs to go through the fence, or to only use gates - less chance of getting hung up
- Ensure dog clips are fully functioning. If they lose the sliding catch, they can get caught up on fences, which can be fatal if electric

If your dog has any major injury, e.g. broken bone or torn ligaments, anticipate that it will take a while to heal and that a 100% return to previous work is not guaranteed. The better the post-operative care (when we say "lead walks only", we mean it), the greater the chance of a speedy recovery. It takes time for a dog's fitness to build up again. Don't expect a day of brilliant runs after 6 weeks off - how would you cope?

# Lepto and other vaccinations

Greg Smith

Time stops for no one including those with calves to vaccinate (and cows). If you haven't already done so now is the time to plan your lepto vaccinations and mark a date in the calendar.

Guidelines for a typical Manawatu herd (defined as a spring calving herd with good colostrum management in a low summer rainfall area) are as follows:

- Calves (born July/August/September) are due for their first (sensitiser) dose during March/April
- Calves booster dose is due 4-6 weeks after sensitiser
- Cows and R2 heifers annual booster is due in April/May

Note that the calves' booster dose should coincide with the cow/heifer annual booster dose. This means that the interval between annual doses will not exceed 12 months in later years and puts all animals on the same cycle. Also remember to stick to a 4-6 week interval between the sensitiser and booster for calves. The further outside this interval, the more variable the response resulting in an increasing number of individuals without adequate immunity.

For autumn calves (born March/April), give the first dose at 12 weeks of age (May/June) with

the booster dose 4-6 weeks later. The annual booster will then coincide with the rest of the animals in autumn. If calves are less than 12 weeks at the time of the first dose, then an additional dose is required 6 months later to ensure adequate immunity.

Variations from this protocol may occur when calves are mixed with animals that are either unvaccinated or of unknown status when sent away for grazing. This will occasionally occur before vaccinations are normally started. In this case, vaccinate calves before they leave and give an additional dose 6 months later and thereafter in autumn, as for the rest of the herd.

Other vaccines to consider at this time are 5-in-1 and BVD. The earlier these are started, the better. This is certainly recommended before mixing with other stock of unknown status, and in the case of 5-in-1, before transportation.



## What's the goss?

Catherine's daughter **Calla** was all smiles at Horse of the Year. Competing in the Training U18 Horse Trial, the highlight of her weekend was not only her 6th placing, but also getting to meet her equestrian idol, Olympic three-time medallist Sir Mark Todd. Catherine says it's the very first time she has seen Calla speechless!

Last month was a busy one for our triathletes, with **Kellie**, **Tracey** and **Suzanne** competing in the Rongotea triathlon (Kellie won by one second!), and **Charmaine** in a Triathlon Manawatu event in Palmerston North. This is especially impressive as Suzanne only learned to swim a couple of years ago - a huge amount of determination. **Margaret** continues to impress in the mountain biking field. She competed in the Karapoti Classic 50k expert ride, finishing 4th in the 30-39 age group, in a

time of 3:49:38. It's worth noting the winner's time of 3:28:19 - not far away at all!

Huge congratulations to **Selena** and **Cam** who got married on 23th February and had a perfect day. At time of writing, we wish **Lucy** and **Dan** all the best for their wedding on the 23rd March.

Our vet nurse **Kayla** is off to the US in April for an eight-week dog training internship with the San Francisco SPCA, where she will be working with shelter dogs to learn more about dog behaviour and how to manage it. Her background preparation has been huge, as the course usually takes five to six months to complete. She is already looking forward to sharing her knowledge with our clients at Totally Vets, working with them to offer solutions to behaviour problems. Before she heads home, she will be taking time out with fiancé Groves - Las Vegas, Yosemite National Park and Los Angeles are on their itinerary.

Most of our hospital attended the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) Congress in Auckland in March. The conference was very worthwhile, for both our nursing and small animal vet teams. New surgical techniques, meeting the authors of many well-known veterinary reference books, finding out new regimes for managing pain and new thoughts on treating ears were some of the areas they covered.

Sadly for us, **Kellie** is leaving us at the end of the month to travel the world (well, UK for now!) with her partner Tracey. Kellie has been an integral part of the hospital team in Feilding for three and half years and will be sorely missed by everyone here. We wish you safe and happy travels Kellie and hope to have you back with us one day soon. **Helen Sheard** will be replacing Kellie - some of you will already know Helen as she currently works part-time in the hospital.



# The 'Typical' Manawatu Sheep & Beef Farm Feed Budget

Ginny Dodunski

## How big is the deficit? Can we salvage the spring?

Those of you who routinely feed-budget will already know the answer to the first question for your own farm, and the answer to the second question is far more likely to be 'yes'.

If your current approach is to hope that the rain we got a few weeks ago will be enough to get things back on track, doing a basic feed budget could make a really big difference to how your spring pans out after this season's drought. We can help!

The following applies to a 'typical' hill country breeding property. Come and talk to us for specific advice on your own situation.

## Pasture cover

There are three key points where we need to assess and set targets for your pasture cover:

1. Right now
2. 1st May (or mid-May?)
3. 1st September

## Right now

Summer and autumn pasture is higher in dry matter than winter and spring-grown pasture, so there is probably more there than you think. Average covers of 1100 to 1300kg of dry matter per hectare are common (average of 2-3cm length over whole farm). This is obviously well below what it needs to be, but is a starting point and helps quantify how

much growth we need to stimulate, and/or how many mouths we need to remove from the system.

## May

Pasture cover on 1st May is an important indicator of how well a farm is going to get through the winter, and what feed will be available to late-pregnant and lambing ewes in spring. The target will vary for individual farms, depending on livestock system, forage system and lambing date but 1800kgDM/ha might be a typical target. 2000 is more comfortable.

Is there any way you can lift your cover to within target in the next four weeks?

The answer to this question is: probably not. Even if we get fantastic growth in April (in other drought years, we have recorded hill country pasture growth rates of in excess of 35kgDM/ha in April and May after decent rain, but 20 or less is more typical), there are just not enough days left to make up the deficit.

If average cover is 1100kgDM/ha on the 1st of April, and pasture grows at say 30kgDM/ha/day (will it?) for 30 days, cover will increase by 30kgDM/ha x 30 days = 900kgDM/ha. So this would give us a cover of 2000kgDM/ha on 1st May - sweet!

But unless you are completely de-stocked, your animals will be eating something between 12 and 25kgDM/ha/day. So depending on demand, pre-winter pasture covers may recover somewhat, or continue at crisis levels.

Do you know what your daily feed demand is? Unless you are down to minimum capital stock numbers, your feed situation will be probably be going backwards quickly. And even if you are down to minimum numbers, it is unlikely you are going to hit early winter pasture targets.

## September

The earlier your lambing date, the higher pasture cover needs to be at the end of August/early September, because there will be a longer period before pasture growth catches up with demand from late pregnant and lactating ewes.

To maximise lambing performance, ewes should not graze pasture any shorter than 1200kgDM/ha in late pregnancy and lactation. Depending on a whole lot of factors, this might mean set stocking onto 1200 cover, but it might mean set stocking onto 1400.

## Filling the gap

For nearly all farms, there is no way these September pasture cover targets will be achieved without serious de-stocking (not practical or possible for most) or investment in nitrogen (N) to grow a big wedge of extra grass.

If we have some idea of what your average cover is now, and your stock numbers, we can quickly help you work out how much nitrogen needs to be applied to make up the deficit. From a farm system perspective, autumn-applied N usually gives better bang for your bucks than N applied just prior to lambing. But your winter management has to be good enough that the feed grown is rationed properly. And given the year, a second dressing closer to lambing could be required. We can help you work out the numbers.

Finally: the cost of applying N to save the winter may seem like the last straw that you just cannot afford this season. But the cost of not getting your pastures back up and running quickly will not only impact on this season's lambing, but productive and financial performance for years to come. Once we get moisture, nitrogen is by far and away the main nutrient limiting pasture growth, the supply of which is something you have control over - unlike the rain.

# What's the best drench for weaner deer?

## Ginny Dodunski

I hate this question because there isn't a best drench! It really annoys me that

1. The deer industry has been slow to capitalize on the last decade's research into sustainable anthelmintic use in sheep and cattle; much of what we have learned can and should be applied to deer systems.
2. The manufacturers of worm control products show little inclination to help in this regard; though I understand their perspective in that the deer market is small, confined largely to New Zealand, and the investment required to get new products to market is huge.

Intensive deer farms (and deer blocks within mixed farms) are sitting on a drench resistance time bomb. This might sound a bit melodramatic but all the factors that have been shown to be important at ramping up drench resistance in sheep and cattle systems are at play:

- A single animal species
- Reliance on pour-ons
- Reliance on one-drug class
- Drenching of adult animals; often whole mobs rather than just the tail

Some limited monitoring we have done suggests that drench resistance or inefficacy problems have been apparent on Manawatu deer farms for a number of years. This is being reflected by work being done in the South Island too.

Three things that we can immediately implement on our deer farms to slow the onset of drench resistance are:

1. Use of oral drenches (or at least, anything other than pour-ons)
2. Use of combination drenches
3. The use of refugia

### Combination drenches for deer

There are none! The issue is further complicated by the fact that:

- Levamisole appears almost completely ineffective in deer
- White (BZ) drenches at the standard cattle dose rate have been shown to be of limited effectiveness; a higher dose rate improves their performance

Come in and have a chat to us about getting a reasonable sort of combination into your weaners at a sensible cost. In the meantime, we continue to put pressure on the manufacturers to come up with something specifically designed for deer.

### Refugia

If you farm sheep, you should have heard of this by now. It is the concept of:

- Accepting that you will always have some worms on your farm
- That for a period after you drench stock, the only worms that come out their back end are ones which have survived your drench
- The more of these worms that have a chance to breed with each other, the faster drench resistance will develop
- So if you can leave some worms 'unselected' by drench, the rate of resistance development will be slower

**The power of Refugia, plus combination use, to reduce the rate of resistance development, has been well documented by NZ parasitologists. Next month we'll talk about how the principles might be practically applied in deer systems. Or if you can't wait, have a chat to your friendly Totally Vets deer vet!**

# Time to spruce up your house dog!

Our purpose-built pet grooming suite is a hive of activity. The word has got out in the Manawatu that we run a top-of-the-range grooming service. Highly experienced Raewyn Brew is supported by Nardiene Spicer and Diane White in turning out beautiful dogs and cats.

Di has been a member of the Totally Vets (and previously Manawatu Vets) team for 17 years. Affectionately known as 'Aunty Di', she is the Totally Vets fairy godmother. She began at

reception (back at the Kimbolton Road clinic) and her role has since grown to include cat and dog grooming, maintenance and admin, coordinating client seminars and judging school pet days. If you need anything done, Di is your lady! She is a whizz at organising the grooms, doing her very best at fitting you in when it suits you, as well as giving you a courtesy reminder call the day before your booking.

Raewyn brings a raft of experience to Totally Vets - from grooming, running a pet store, to taking doggy day-care and puppy classes. She takes great pride in her grooms and has brought a touch of class to our grooming service. If you walk down the corridor past the grooming suite, you will often see Raewyn with her shoes kicked off, singing along to

music and chatting away to the animals! She is equally skilled at grooming to breed type as well as grooming to your specific requirements.

Nardiene has been around animals all her life and has more recently swapped horses for dogs and cats. As with Raewyn, she has a natural ability with animals, grooming and the passion to exceed your expectations.

If your house dog needs a bath and a bit of a spruce up, we offer everything from a simple wash and dry to all the bells and whistles, including coat-stripping, ear-plucking, nail clips and breed-specific clips (for those that are into bows, this is also an option!). All you need to do is ring us at the Feilding branch on 06 323 6161 and we will organise this for you. Drop your dog off in the morning, and pick up at your convenience - it's that easy.



# Has your herd matched expectations?

Greg Smith

The prolonged dry period has meant pregnancy testing has already been completed in most cases. Overall the empty rates have been higher than last year with an average six-week in-calf rate of 65% and empty rate of 12.5%.

With the results available, now is a good time to review your outcome. The Fertility Focus Report for your herd available in MINDApro is the ideal tool for this. This report not only provides the two final measures of mating performance, that is the six-week in-calf rate and final empty rate, but also the outcomes for the different aspects of mating that contribute to the final result. Comparing your results to acceptable standards will indicate whether a problem exists.

For overall performance, a problem exists if the six-week in-calf rate is less than 68%. For final empty rate, the length of mating must be considered for the comparison to be relevant. The levels indicating a problem are as follows:

Length of Mating	Empty Rate
6 weeks	Greater than 32%
9 weeks	Greater than 15%
12 weeks	Greater than 9%
15 weeks	Greater than 8%

Because NZ has a seasonally-based system, the rate at which cows get pregnant has a major effect on the final empty rate. A late-calving cow will struggle to resume normal cycling activity in time to be successfully mated during the allotted time. This is the reason that the six-week in-calf rate is important. The drivers of the six-week in-calf rate are the three-week submission rate and the conception rate. A problem exists if the three-week submission rate is less than 81% and the conception rate is less than 53%.

If a problem exists, the rest of the Fertility Focus Report can be used to find the area or areas of greatest concern. Broadly, these are the number of non-cycling cows at the start of mating, the calving pattern for both the cows and heifers, the three-week submission rate of the heifers, heat detection and the performance of the bulls. Once the problem areas have been identified, a closer examination of these can be made.

The most pressing concern from now until the end of lactation is cow condition. Cows that calve at a body condition score (BCS) of 5.0 to 5.5 will perform better at the subsequent mating than lighter BCS cows. The ability to put BCS on cows during the dry period

is limited by time and pregnancy and in most circumstances, cows will only gain 0.5 of a BCS during a 60-day dry period. This means consideration needs to be given to the current BCS of cows in the herd and how long they would ideally require to achieve an acceptable BCS by calving. For example a cow in BCS 3.0 requires 120 days to reach target; BCS 3.5 requires 100 days; BCS 4.0 requires 80 days; BCS 4.5 requires 60 days. 1st Calvers require 20 days longer i.e. BCS 3.0 – 140 days; BCS 3.5 – 120 days; BCS 4.0 – 100 days; BCS 4.5 – 80 days.

By condition-scoring the herd now, you can establish the portion of the herd falling into to each BCS category; this information can then be used to prioritise feed and drying-off dates to best manage these cows. Given the current dry conditions, this assumes even greater significance as feed resources will be stretched from now through until calving regardless. The lighter-conditioned cows can be identified and given an early dry-off date. In a smaller group away from competition, they will have a better chance to achieve BCS gain; milk production is usually not unduly affected as the milking herd will also be more effectively managed.

As for last year, Totally Vets is providing a BCS service and using that information along with a feed budget based on available feed supply to help plan the best approach for your herd during what remains of the current lactation.

Visit Totally Vets to get the real deal on getting better results using Merial Ancare cattle products and you could hook yourself one of these SHIMANO rod and reel deals\* for better results on the water too.

\*Shimano fishing rod and reel or Rapala knife yours with qualifying purchase while stocks last



Soft bait set or TLD15 set qualifying packs: 1 x EPRINEX® 20L, 1 x ECLIPSE® 10L, 1 x GENESIS® Pour-On 10L, 1 x MATRIX®C HI-min 20L, 1 x EXODUS® Pour-on 20L, 3 x ECLIPSE® Bulk pack (4x500mL), 2 x IVOmec®PLUS Herd Pack (6x500mL)  
 Allivio set or TR200G set qualifying packs: 1 x EPRINEX® 5L, 1 x ECLIPSE® 2.5L, 1 x GENESIS® Pour-On 5L, 1 x GENESIS® Ultra Pour On 5L, 1 x SWITCH®C HI-Mineral 20L, 1 x EXODUS® Pour-on 5L, 1 x MATRIX®C HI-min 10L  
 Filleting Knife qualifying packs: 1 x GENESIS® Pour-On 2.5L, 2 x GENESIS® Injection 500mL, 2 x GENESIS® Inj B12 500mL plus SE, 2 x ECLIPSE® inj 500mL, 2 x IVOmec®PLUS 1% - 500mL, 1 x SWITCH®C HI-Mineral 10L



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## Upcoming events

### Totally Vets Fishing Competition

Saturday 13th April

Castlecliff boat ramp, Wanganui

All registered boats to have VHF radio

Launching from 6am

\$20 per entry (conditions apply)

Weigh in at Wanganui Boat Club by 3pm

Entry fee can be charged to your current

Totally Vets account

Contact either clinic for your entry form

